

AppLab

Transforming Lives through Innovation in Information Access


[HOME](#)
[ABOUT APPLAB](#)
[UGANDA PROJECTS](#)
[RELATED ACTIVITIES](#)
[WORK WITH APPLAB](#)
[RESOURCE CENTER](#)

« [Agriculture and Mobile Phones Come Together With Our Community Knowledge Worker Project in Uganda](#)
[Lessons About Pregnancy and Motherhood Via Songs on a Mobile Phone?](#) »

What Do Farmers Want To Know?



Calling into Question Box

During the test of concept phase of our [Community Knowledge Worker initiative](#), AppLab Question Box (aqb) was one of the services that the CKWs provided to rural communities. [Grameen Foundation](#) worked with [Appfrica Labs](#), and US based NGO, [Open Mind](#), to pilot this service. aqb is a live, local language hotline service that brings the Internet and expert advice to the homes and market stalls of individuals who may never see a computer, visit an agricultural specialist, or read in English. Between April and September, villagers in Uganda's Mbale and Bushenyi districts had access to the service to ask agricultural, education, recent events and other questions.

Villagers access aqb via CKWs who connect to local-language telephone operators. Once a question is asked, an operator searches for the answer in English and calls back with the answer, translated back into the local language. The operators can answer many questions by searching pre-approved websites and doing and local database searches, but, when necessary, can also escalate questions to identified experts. aqb currently works with [Uganda's National Agricultural Research Organization \(NARO\)](#) to bring accurate and relevant agricultural information to smallholder farmers. NARO also provided the list of approved agricultural websites and a wealth of locally relevant resources from a range of agricultural organizations.

Between April and September, the hotline received almost 3000 calls from CKWs and our analysis of the questions provides great insight into the questions that are of greatest importance to rural communities. Roughly 2/3 of all questions asked focused on agriculture, with health, education, and news being the next most popular subject areas. Diving deeper into the data we are able to learn more about what, specifically, farmers are asking about agriculture. The following table provides a breakdown of the agriculture-specific questions:

Content area	Percentage of calls	Example
Crop problems related to pests, nutrients, and diseases	42%	"What is the cause and control of spotted leaf disease?" "What type of fertilizer should I use in my coffee garden, which is one year old?"
Crop production techniques	15%	"Is it OK to intercrop coffee and maize?"
Agricultural product prices	12%	"What is the price of rice in Bushenyi?"
Health problems related to animal husbandry	17%	"What is the cause and cure for diarrhea in goats?"
Enterprise development for animal husbandry	6%	"How do you rear or manage rabbits?"
Other	8%	No pattern

This information is extremely helpful for us. For example, the fact that such a high proportion of questions focus on pest and disease control may mean that we should focus our efforts on new applications that help farmers address the most frequently encountered problems.



More Question Box users

As we plan for the next phase of the project, we are taking special care to ensure that we will be able to collect data, like the above, on a regular and reliable basis. It is only by listening to farmers that we will ensure that CKWs are providing services that meet the real needs of the communities that they serve.

Posted by: Adam Taylor, Project Officer

Share and Enjoy:

...applab.org/.../what-do-farmers-wan...

• Search

Search for:

Search

• AppLab Tweets

- ◊ Reading: [@CFI_ACCION](#) posts in the [@huffingtonpost](#) on [@GrameenFdn](#) 's recent paper "The Impact of #Microfinance" <http://huff.to/9unw4c> 04:53:26 PM June 21, 2010 from [TweetDeck](#)
- ◊ Our [#Mobile](#) [#Technology](#) for [#Community](#) [#Health](#) "MoTeCH" launch is under way in [#Ghana](#)! Learn about "Durbars": [#ICT4D](http://bit.ly/bP02mB) 03:08:03 PM June 15, 2010 from [TweetDeck](#)
- ◊ "Poverty has to be defined by those who experience it, not by those who study it." - [@BeyondProfit](#) RT [@fmscredit](#) 08:27:42 PM June 14, 2010 from [TweetDeck](#)

• Archives

- ◊ [June 2010](#) (1)
- ◊ [May 2010](#) (2)
- ◊ [January 2010](#) (2)
- ◊ [December 2009](#) (1)
- ◊ [November 2009](#) (1)
- ◊ [October 2009](#) (6)
- ◊ [June 2009](#) (1)

• Categories

- ◊ [Africa](#)
- ◊ [AppLab](#)
- ◊ [Community Health Worker](#)
- ◊ [Community Knowledge Worker](#)
- ◊ [ICTI](#)
- ◊ [Indonesia](#)
- ◊ [MoTeCH](#)
- ◊ [Uncategorized](#)
- ◊ [Village Phone](#)

• Tag Cloud

"needs assessment" [Agriculture](#)
[Appfrica Labs](#) [AppLab](#) [Apps](#)
[Bushenyi](#) [CHW](#) [CKW](#)
[Communication](#) [Community](#)
[Health Worker](#) [Community](#)
[Knowledge Worker](#) [Culture](#)
[Farming](#) [Gates Foundation](#) [Ghana](#)
[Grameen Foundation](#)
[Harvard](#) [Health](#) [ICT4D](#) [ICTI](#)
[Indonesia](#) [Innovation](#) [Mbale](#)
[mHealth](#) [Mobile](#) [MoTeCH](#) [NARO](#)
[Open Mind](#) [Pregnancy](#) [PT Ruma](#)
[Question Box](#) [research](#) [SMEs](#) [SMS](#)
[Song survey](#) [Technology](#)
[Uganda](#) [Video](#) [Village Phone](#)

-
-
-
-
-
-
-
-
-

Tags: [Agriculture](#), [Appfrica Labs](#), [Bushyeni](#), [CKW](#), [Communication](#), [Community Knowledge Worker](#), [Grameen Foundation](#), [ICT4D](#), [ICTI](#), [Innovation](#), [Mbale](#), [Mobile](#), [NARO](#), [Open Mind](#), [Question Box](#), [Technology](#), [Uganda](#)

This entry was posted on Friday, October 23rd, 2009 at 4:55 pm and is filed under [Community Knowledge Worker](#). You can follow any responses to this entry through the [RSS 2.0](#) feed. You can [leave a response](#), or [trackback](#) from your own site.

One Response to "What Do Farmers Want To Know?"

1.  [Valery Colong](#) says:
[October 28, 2009 at 5:58 am](#)

I wish to congratulate you all for the wonderful work you are doing. Information is what an average African needs in upgrade his/her standard of living. Let us continue the fact and don't relent; we may help bring a new era of revolution in Africa.
Ride on people!!!

Leave a Reply

 Name (required) Mail (will not be published) (required) Website

[Grameen Foundation](#) | [Applab](#) | [Mifos](#) | [Progress Out of Poverty](#) | [Village Phone](#)

Copyright © 2009 Grameen Foundation | [PRIVACY POLICY](#)

[DONATE NOW](#)

[FOLLOW US ON !\[\]\(83bbbd261710c59db0214aa27b2edc0d_img.jpg\)](#)